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ABSTRACT

This paper considers the options for Quebec in a globalizing economy. Quebec has not only been recognized as being distinct in the Canadian political context, but it is also seen as having a distinct business culture. As Quebec looks to its expanding cultural and economic role within larger zones such as NAFTA and the FTAA, a certain tension has arisen between the forces of cultural and economic expansion on the one hand and those of protectionism on the other. The question is whether Quebec should promote its distinctive language and culture or try to protect it, and are these options mutually exclusive. It is argued that there are indications that the debate has been shifting in favor of the forces favoring vigorous promotion of Quebecois culture as a means of both reinforcing Quebec's national identity and pride in its culture and hastening Quebec's move toward a model of a post-national society. Increasingly, Quebec sees itself developing under the aegis of a supranational authority. Clearly, it will--in collaboration with other partners including the Canadian Federal Government--develop new structures at the level of government, business, and civil society to manage issues of cultural and linguistic identity in a globalized context of diversity. (Contains 24 references.) (Author/KFT)

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TO PROTECT OR TO PROMOTE OR TO PROMOTE AND PROTECT, THOSE ARE THE QUESTIONS

Québec ponders its future under FTAA

J. Archibald

Not only has Québec been recognized as being 'distinct' in the Canadian political context, but it is also seen as having a distinct business culture. As Québec looks to expanding its cultural and economic role within larger trade zones such as NAFTA and FTAA, a certain tension has built up between the forces of cultural and economic expansion on the one hand and those of protectionism on the other. The questions are then put: Should one protect or promote Québec's distinctive language and culture? Are these options mutually exclusive?

Recognition of the distinct character of Québec society

In terms of public policy, Québec has always cultivated its difference in both cultural and linguistic terms. This difference is, in fact, recognized in official texts which have a direct bearing on government programs.

For instance, in terms of immigration, the Québec and Federal Governments have formally recognized *le caractèré distinct de la société québécoise*. **(EIC 1)** This recognition affects key areas of national development such as Québec's immigration policy, where efforts are made to integrate newcomers into the cultural and linguistic life of Québec society. This policy illustrates in microcosm how Québec views is own distinct character within the context of policies which are co-managed with the Federal Government.

This difference allows one to contrast the two polities in sociolinguistic terms. Québec is a predominantly French-speaking society having French as its official language while Canada defines itself as a bilingual state having two official languages: English and French. Hence, Canadian bilingualism is often at odds with the brand of unilingualism promoted by recent Québec governments and important stakeholders in Québec civil society. Further, Québec espouses the principles of cultural pluralism while Canada has adopted an official multicultural policy.[1]

For historical reasons going back to the colonization of New France and the subsequent conquest by the British, Québec has developed a clearly distinct set of public institutions which are a mix of both heritages. The *Assemblée nationale*, its customs and procedures are a stunning example of British parliamentary democracy *à la française*. Beyond the government sphere, civil society in Québec has developed under sociolinguistic, religious and economic conditions which are themselves quite distinct from those prevalent in the rest of Canada. As a form of public policy reinforcement, community and cultural

[1] See the discussion of the "politics of recognition" in Taylor, Charles. *Multiculturalism, Examining the Politics of Recognition*.

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institutions strengthen the use of French as the language of public discourse even when there is no legislative imperative.

Moreover, Québec business culture is the product of a distinct business history in the Canadian, American and international contexts. This business culture mirrors dominant beliefs, values and attitudes specific to Quebec culture and is officially recognized, for example, in the criteria used to identify potential investors and economic immigrants to Québec: the Québec Government's ideal business culture is thus marked by family values, international humanism, cultural pluralism, interracial and inter-ethnic respect and harmony, a commitment to democracy and an allegiance to the French language and culture. These factors all play a role in the selection of potential immigrants by Québec authorities and clearly demonstrate into what type of business and investment community one would like newcomers to integrate. (Archibald 11)

In keeping with this policy, Québec has come to use its educational system as a means to ensure this socioeconomic, cultural and linguistic integration. For this reason, among others, Québec's educational system is distinct from that of the rest of Canada and was designed with a view to promote both socioeconomic and cultural growth in the context of a predominantly French-speaking society.

Among the other public institutions which affect the difference, one must recognize Québec's health care and social welfare systems, which are run quite independently of others in Canada and are the outgrowth of specific historical circumstances. One of the major factors affecting this difference has been the historic role of the Catholic Church in Québec civil society.

The Church and the structure of civil society

In his ground-breaking study of the influence of the Church on the culture of Latin American polities, Claudio Véliz notes that Church dominance in "Latin" societies has tended to affect the culture in that the remnants of Church-based organizations have determined many social and governmental structures. In the Québec Government's public discourse, it very often speaks of Québec society as being a northern "Latin" society. Véliz notes, in referring to Vargas Llosa's views on culture, that this "Latin" (Catholic) mentality manifests itself today in national mindsets which are "populist and oligarchic, or absolutist, collectivist or dogmatic, flawed by social and racial prejudices, immensely intolerant with respect to political adversaries, and devoted to the worst monopoly of all, that of truth." (Véliz 190) [2] It is clear that throughout those American[3] colonies dominated by the Catholic Church, this institution alone has had a proven structural impact on the development of "Latin" societies, including Québec seen as a northern "Latin" society.

This is what Raymond Lemieux and Jean-Paul Montminy have termed *la tâche*

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[2] See also Vargas Llosa, Mario. "América Latina y la Opción Liberal". In Levine, Barry, ed. *El desafío neoliberal: El fin del tercermundismo en América Latina.* BOGOTA: 1992, pp 17-36.

[3] "American", is meant to be understood in the same way it was used by José Martí; see Martí, José. "Our America", in Martí, José. *Our America: Writings on Latin America and the Struggle for Cuban Independence.*

d'encadrement de la conscience, individuelle et collective, des Québécois. (Lemieux and Montminy 8) a task which has been at the center of the Church's work since the establishment of the colony and continues to this day, although in more subtle ways.

Outside the purely religious sphere, the Church has played a very important role in developing Québec's civil society. Most importantly, Québec's major educational institutions carried the imprimatur of the Catholic Church. In addition to that, its charitable works fashioned institutional structures which live on today. Lemieux and Montminy explain:

> *De toute évidence, l'influence de l'Eglise au Canada français est en très grande partie l'effet naturel de cette capacité d'action dans ... l'éducation et la charité (représentant l'archéologie de ce qu'on appelle aujourd'hui, en contexte sécularisé, les 'affaires sociales', avec leurs institutions de soins, de garde, de prévention et d'accueil.* (30)

Furthermore Church structures provided a framework for cultural development in a broader sense. This civilizing effect also had a lasting impact by framing the cultural organization of civil society as it emerged from total Church domination.

> *A travers elle [l'Eglise], une culture autre que la culture proprement utilitaire du métier et des tâches quotidiennes, une culture plus vaste, viendra au peuple. A travers ses bibliotèques, les cabinets de lecture paroissiaux, on s'initiera à une certaine littérature. Dans les choeurs paroissiaux, lors des séances montées dans les institutions, on pratiquera la musique et l'art oratoire. Pour un musicien, dans la première moitié du XX^e siècle encore, les seuls débouchés professionnels permettant de gagner sa vie ne sont-ils pas offerts encore soit par l'armée, soit par l'Eglise?* (31-32)

The Church acted to protect the moral and cultural authenticity of traditional Québec society while at the same time it provided institutional support for the people, a form of support which extended far beyond the purely religious function of the Church. In its paternalistic manner, the Church sought to provide for its flock in a variety of ways. These included institutional interventions in the areas of

1. Education
2. Health care
3. Social welfare
4. Culture and language[4] and
5. Employment in the above sectors.

Hence, prior to what has been commonly called the "Quiet Revolution", the Church did indeed manage effective public policy in all the above sectors without wielding the direct power of government.

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[4] See GROULX, Lionel. *Histoire du Canada français depuis la découverte*.

The political will to extend Québec's socioeconomic and cultural influence beyond its borders

Against this backdrop and after having assumed authority for areas previously "governed" by Church-dominated civil society, the current Québec Government has taken a number of measures in order use its distinctness in an expansionist manner reminiscent of the dichotomies explained by Ulrich Beck in his essay on globalization. At opposite ends of the same spectrum one finds the dynamics of political autonomy and submission to supranational authorities. For example, Québec's current Minister of International Relations has adopted a policy designed to promote national autonomy through structured international exchanges with other "Latin" societies within the context of NAFTA and the proposed FTAA. The *Décennie québécoise des Amériques*[5] sets out a number of objectives:

1. Significantly increase exchanges within the Americas
2. Increase Québec exports toward the Americas[6]
3. Promote partnerships within the Americas
4. Promote exchanges among young professionals
5. Increase the number of trilinguals in Québec by 50% by 2010
6. Teach Spanish at large in Québec high schools
7. Promote youth exchanges for young professionals[7]

Civil society

Stakeholders in Québec civil society are regularly consulted as this policy orientation takes shape. To illustrate the point, under pressure from one of Québec's largest labor unions, the CSN, to recognize the trade union movement as a partner in negotiations to expand international trade in the Americas, the Government seemed to be of the view that it would be appropriate to involve such players in the process. Hence, the parliamentary commission examining FTAA and its impact on Québec business culture agreed to

> *Établir un mécanisme permanent d'échange avec la société civile, plus particulièrement avec le mouvement syndical, pour le suivi de toute négociation commerciale internationale.* (Commission.*Rapport* 78)

The same commission consulted a number of organizations which normally are considered representative of civil society on cultural issues. These included political parties, other labor unions, professional associations and NGOs, all with a stake in either

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[5] See BEAUDOIN, Louise. *Communiqué de presse : La décennie québécoise des Amériques.* QUEBEC: Ministère des Relations internationales, 31 May 1999.

[6] 500 Québec businesses currently export to Latin America and the Caribbean; the objective is to bring this number to 1,500 in ten years. The target set for 2010 is 2.6 billion Canadian dollars.

[7] By 2010 Québec plans to allow 3,000 young professionals between 18 and 35 years of age - students and workers in training - to take advantage of North-South exchanges.

the protection or the promotion of Québec's language and culture.[8]

Yet, despite the consultation of a number of stakeholders which one usually associates with civil society, this consultation did not embrace what Benjamin Barber has called the "domain of citizens". (Barber 6) Absent from the list of organizations consulted were NGOs and associations which normally contribute to social cultural identity in the broad sense of the word: religious organizations, community service organizations, voluntary or civic associations, charitable organizations, parent groups, youth organizations and fund-raising groups. As a result, one could say that, because of the selective nature of the consultation, the Québec Government, having self-assumed many of the roles of civil society in defining common culture, continued a trend of working in an "atmosphere of solitude" and of making decisions in the public interest which leave many members of civil society by the wayside, "suffocating [them] in big government's exhaust fumes". (Barber 6) Moreover, organizations representative of an emerging "transnational civil society" (Beck 99)[9] were also ignored. This aspect of the consultative process is in fact contrary to the dynamic of the autonomous, international strategy of nation-building favored by International Relations Minister Louise Beaudoin.

It goes without saying that one of the major contributors to the definition of Québec civil society is the business sector. We noted above some of the ways in which the Québec Government, as a molder of civil society, has tried to influence and shape the very nature of Québec business culture. However, these efforts are quite recent if one takes the long view of culture in emerging societies. In a recent study of business culture in Québec, Jean-Pierre Dupuis presents a more balanced long-term view of this evolutionary situation. One does not have to await the 21st century with its globalizing trends to explain the effects of cultural interminglings on Québec business culture. This interculture already exists according to Dupuis: it is the result of a mixture of "Latin", anglo-saxon and nordic features. He explains:

A l'origine, et pendant longtemps, les attitudes et les comportements des hommes d'affaires et des gestionnaires québécois ont davantage été ceux des minoritaires ou de Français. Au 20e siècle, le modèle américain s'est fait de plus en plus sentir au point de remplacer ou d'influencer fortement les modèles traditionnels. Les modèles d'aujourd'hui portent la marque de ces différents modèles et présentent souvent, sous le vernis américain, des pratiques plus originales ou plus syncrétiques. ... la culture des hommes d'affaires québécois et des gestionnaires, de même que la gestion pratiquée au Québec, se situent quelque part entre les cultures latine (France) et anglo-saxonne (Angleterre, Canada anglais et Etats-Unis). Il est vrai que la culture comme la gestion incorporent et retravaillent des éléments des modèles des cultures latine et anglo-saxonne mais elles sont aussi le fruit d'éléments structurels propres aux petites sociétés

[8] Bloc Québécois, Centrale des syndicats démocratiques, Centre québécois du droit de l'environnement, Chambre des notaires du Québec, Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN), Conseil de la langue française, Droits et démocratie, Parti Québécois, Réseau québécois sur l'intégration continentale, Union des artistes.

[9] See the very interesting treatment of this new reality in Beck, "La sociedad civil transnacional: cómo se forma una visión cosmopolita", pp 99-126.

nordiques ... plusieurs éléments structurels ... jouent : la position géographique protégeant la société, une histoire de dominations successives, une situation de minorité par rapport aux grandes sociétés ... C'est pour souligner l'importance de ces éléments structurels propres aux petites sociétés nordiques, éléments souvent négligés, que nous ajoutons aux ... qualificatifs ... latin et anglo-saxon l'adjectif nordique pour qualifier la culture québécoise. (Dupuis 33)

Culture at risk

In its discussion paper on the possible effects of FTAA, the Québec Government had in mind not only the traditional outputs of national culture, but also the dynamic of the total environment which creates the conditions for the preservation of cultural identity and the production of cultural outputs. The risks were seen as legion.

Globalization was presented as a force which could undermine Québec's cultural specificity, its distinct character, because of Québec's potential inability to protect its culture in the broadest sense of the term under a free-trade agreement arrived at through negotiations between the Federal Government and other central governments in the Americas. These fears were also linked to concerns about the domination of a single cultural model and a homogenization of values under the influence of the United States. This could then lead to the loss of the "Latin" and "nordic" aspects that Dupuis has identified as the core of both general culture and business culture in Québec. In other words, Québec business people would have to start doing business in a way which would go against the type of culture which has emerged historically and which is actively cultivated by government authorities today. The official and common language of Québec is seen by government as the main carrier of this culture; hence, the challenge for Québec is to protect and preserve not only its distinct way of existence but also its official language. If one were to foresee some form of real or insidious cultural domination under FTAA, then one would have to predict the lack of national resources to support cultural industries and cultural production in a market where "transnational cultural products" would be supported by a financial infrastructure which would dwarf Québec's ability to intervene in order to support its own distinct culture or protect it against unwanted foreign and transnational influences. This would result in disempowerment and undermine both the *identité nationale* and the *sentiment d'appartenance* of citizens who could easily lose sight of the national cultural model and be deprived of the linguistic and economic means to cultivate and express their own specificity. In fact, the whole trade area, which could be enriched by its transnational cultural diversity, could then be culturally compromised if polities within the area were unable to maintain healthy market conditions and economies in which distinct, cultural products and services might thrive and in which citizens might not only maintain their own cultural identity but also develop a new transnational cultural identity. Hence, once again, Québec underscores the potential link between the protection of its cultural specificity and the development of a new transnational identity.

Of particular concern is the role of information technology in an expanded American free-trade area. The ubiquitous use of English as a means of international communication

is seen as an especially dangerous threat to Québec's official language. Consequently, Québec legislators on both sides of the National Assembly underscore the necessity of protecting the French language as a carrier of national identity.

Hence, at issue in the cultural debate on FTAA are the means which the Québec Government has at its disposal to protect its *identité nationale* while at the same time taking full advantage of the cultural and economic opportunities inherent in the agreement to expand trade within the Americas. (Commission *Document* 28)

Opportunities for cultural development

This tone of caution having been set, the discussion paper then identifies a number of potential opportunities to be seized. In general terms, globalization as a process and FTAA as an enabling transnational structure open the way to cultural and economic exchanges as well as market development. This view is entirely compatible with the policy direction behind the *Décennie québécoise des Amériques*. Trade liberalization may, in fact, be a means to increase international trade in culturally distinct products and provide a strategic opening for those regions and countries best equipped to develop their cultural industries and to export their cultural products. Given the pluralist direction of many policy statements in this context and given the pervasive nature of information technology in the American marketplace, FTAA could also represent a singular market opportunity to develop new information technologies and to ensure at the same time the pivotal role of the French language in these technologies, including the Internet, multilingual software and localization services. Consequently, trade liberalization could well represent an opportunity to be seized with vigor by the Québec business environment and its cultural industries in the broadest sense of the term. (28)

Putting culture on the negotiators' agenda

Contrary to what transpired during the negotiation of NAFTA, FTAA represents a new opportunity to put culture and language issues on the table since Québec is not the only polity to be concerned with the protection of its cultural and linguistic identity under a future free-trade area for the Americas. This had been referred to obliquely in the talks leading up to the current negotiations. In point of fact, negotiators at the Miami Summit agreed in December 1994, that the public and private sectors should build partnerships focusing on a number of issues having significant cultural implications. These included among others the participation of civil society in the trade liberalization process, the promotion of cultural values, infrastructure development, technical cooperation and education. (ZLEA 30-33) It is self-evident that representatives of civil society, both nationally and transnationally, have much at stake in cultural terms. The protection and promotion of the French language and culture represent bedrock values in Québec public policy and will continue to do in the context of further trade liberalization. Technical cooperation will have a direct impact on the development of the information highway in languages other than English; it will also affect software development and the expansion of the localization industry throughout the Americas. Finally, education systems, educational exchanges, cooperative international education and the like all come together to support both national cultural specificity and the emergence of new transcultural

identities which may enhance both the languages and cultures of member countries. So, culture is truly on the agenda. The Québec Government's job will then be to clarify from its own perspective the cultural orientation of the Canadian negotiating position. This was truly one of the positive effects of the National Assembly's concerted effort to consult as broadly as possible with members of Québec civil society on culture and language issues.

Québec puts culture on the agenda

Consequently, the balanced view adopted by the National Assembly recognizes both the potentially positive and negative effects of FTAA on Québec culture. Although the primary focus of previous summits has not been squarely on cultural issues, the clarion call from Québec City is that this question is of central concern and must be addressed by negotiators. As the ersatz representative of many areas of activity in the former Church-dominated civil society of Québec, today's Québec Government and selected members of contemporary civil society were able to formulate common concerns. The groups consulted included representatives from the artistic community, environmental groups, a selection of NGOs, grass-roots political movements, labor unions and professional associations, all of which have a clear concomitant stake in preserving the specificity of Québec society while at the same time seeking out the advantages of expanded trade opportunities in the Americas.

An action plan takes shape

Following consultation and further deliberation among members of the *Commission des institutions*, the emerging consensus pointed toward the necessity of protecting cultural diversity, that is the cultural specificity of member states, in a free trade area where cultures will be in regular contact or in possible conflict. With respect to the French language, the Québec Government position called for the protection of the *national* language against the hegemonic influences of the other more widely-used languages in the free trade area: i. e. English, Spanish and Portuguese. By ensuring a measure of protection, the French language and culture will then be able to endure in a larger context of cultural diversity. The strategy is then to seek out guarantees through the promotion of a policy of linguistic and cultural plurality. This is consistent with standing Québec policy in its opposition of record to Canadian bilingualism and federally-inspired multiculturalism.

Québec sets the tone with respect to cultural issues

On both sides of the National Assembly, there seems to be a political consensus on cultural issues vis-à-vis FTAA. This consensus is further strengthened by the belief that the business community and major players in civil society buy into the Government's policy orientation. Firstly, it is seen as imperative that the negotiated agreement on free trade in the Americas recognize the distinct nature of Québec's specificity in terms of its official language and its majority culture. Secondly, negotiators should be compelled to recognize the real risk of linguistic and cultural domination by the United States in the context of FTAA. Hence, in the Québec Government's view, a valid stance to be

considered in the on-going negotiations could be to "exclure la culture des accords commerciaux, que ce soit par clause d'exception ou par exclusion pure et simple". (Commission *Rapport* 86)

Cultural diversity and international business: protective strategies

If culture is to be excluded from trade agreements of this nature, it then becomes important to have a clear, shared understanding of what this term means. The problem was summarized in the following way:

> *Si elle [la culture] est considérée comme un bien ou un service au même titre que tous les autres, nous ne pourrons plus prendre de mesures de protection nationales, par exemple pour protéger notre spécificité culturelle ou nous protéger contre l'envahissement d'un modèle culturel dominant, sous peine de s'exposer à des poursuites par les autres États pour concurrence déloyale.* (86)

These measures are but alluded to; however, an example cited by the Union des artistes and referred to by the Commission gives a hint to future policy direction. Cultural "goods and services" are seen as the commercially saleable outputs of Québec's cultural industries. In keeping with a long-standing tradition of state support for these industries, from both the Canadian and Québec perspectives, one recognizes that these outputs are the end result of a well-established socio-economic, creative process which most likely would not have come to fruition without some form of state-sponsored support. There is a justifiable fear that such support would be ruled out under a free-trade agreement and that unsupported cultural industries would falter under the weight of massive competition from abroad, thus weakening and undermining the cultural and linguistic specificity which is at the core of Québec's *identité nationale*. Many in civil society see state support for cultural industries as a necessity. To give it up would cause a tectonic shift in Québec's linguistic and cultural landscape. Hence, the consensual view is to exclude cultural industries from the agreement. The problem will be to provide a clear and applicable definition of these industries which will be acceptable to those other member states sitting around the negotiating table. The Union des artistes sums up its argument as follows: "Prendre la défense de l'intervention de l'État dans le domaine culturel, c'est défendre le choix des consommateurs en s'assurant de l'intégrité du choix offert." (87) In other words, notwithstanding the advantages of trade liberalization, the Québec Government must carve out a position which will allow it to protect the official language and the majority culture and by the same token to guarantee continued access by the Québec population to cultural products and services which will serve to reinforce the officially sanctioned *identité nationale* in a pluralistic America.

Action would not have to be unilateral, however. There seems to be ready acceptance of the concept of exclusionary measures negotiated under the aegis of a supranational body or intergovernmental agency. In fact, this type of arrangement could well form part of an overarching agreement with other polities under FTAA, since other polities have similar concerns with respect to the protection of their own national specificity. Québec may well find comfort in its protective stance along side those countries concerned with the potential cultural domination of the United States under FTAA. Yet, ironically, Québec's

most difficult task may be to find a way to work closely with the Federal negotiating team in order to advance its own cultural and linguistic agenda.

It should be noted once again that the forces of cultural and linguistic nationalism in Québec find greater comfort in internationalism than in Canadian federalism.

Possible protective strategies

The emergence of other free trade areas provides for some points of comparison. For example, in their study of the North African market, Leymairie and Tripier caution that nation-states should avoid full commitment to trade liberalization policies until an intergovernmental agency or supragovernmental authority designed to protect national cultural specificity is in place or agreed to by member states. This guarantee is seen to be key to successful negotiations.

Failing this, the negotiating strategy to be considered could involve the proposal of import duties on foreign cultural goods and services. Such restrictive measures may be appropriate in polities where cultural goods and services have received the support of the State and where cultural industries enjoy a privileged position. Clearly, both Canada and Québec have traditionally protected their cultural industries and strived to maintain their cultural specificity in the face of foreign competition. One need only think of Canadian periodical publications and the Canadian publishing industry which benefited from protective strategies under NAFTA. Another strategy is to have recourse to import quotas on cultural artifacts coming from abroad which could compete against subsidized outputs of cultural industries in the broadest sense of the term. Examples which readily come to mind are computer games, software, films and rock bands. Such cultural products are highly subsidized in both the Canadian and Québec contexts, and the fear is that they would falter under heavy competition from culturally dominant foreign imports, especially those from the United States. A third possible strategy would be to fall back upon a safety net of thinly disguised import/export regulations in all culturally sensitive sectors designed to protect the national cultural output against foreign competition while at the same time encouraging the export of cultural products and services. One thinks of the support given to travelling theatrical troupes, circuses, touring orchestras and the like in terms of festivals welcoming foreign talent or programs promoting the export of such domestic talent abroad; an example of such imports could be the *Juste pour rire* festival, while an example of this type of export could be the *Cirque du soleil*.

Potentially, this strategic approach has both negative and positive effects.

Protective measures such as import duties usually lead to retaliatory measures and eventually to a diminution in the export of domestic cultural products and services and, therefore, a lessening of the polity's cultural visibility – and linguistic audibility – beyond its own borders. Given the artificial nature of the market conditions created by protective measures, these may have a depressing effect on the quality and quantity of national cultural outputs. Moreover, protective measures often lead to inflated domestic prices for national cultural products and services as the result lower export levels and diminished

competition. This cycle can be devastating for fragile cultural industries. Finally, from a purely qualitative perspective, the lack of strong foreign competition in cultural industries may have a depressing effect on the quality of the national cultural output in terms of both products and services. Consequently, negotiators must be keenly aware of the potential negative effects of protective measures as they engage in trade liberalization talks.

Yet, on the other hand, there are significant benefits to be considered when envisaging protective measures. In the short term, these may lead to increased domestic employment opportunities in cultural industries: theatre, publishing and software development, for example. Further, if certain cultural industries are in their initial stages of subsidized development, protective measures may create incubator situations which encourage cultural development in the short term. One might cite as an example the financial support given by the Québec Government to Alis Technologies for their "Gist-In-Time" product/service mix.[10]

Cultural diversity, international business and promotional strategies

The Québec Government recognizes that an equilibrium between protective and promotional strategies must be maintained in international markets. It seems to have opted for a position in the middle ground between a protective stance, *le repli sur soi face au contexte de la globalisation*, and an outward-looking marketing stance, *la promotion de la diversité culturelle*. In both instances, the position is subservient to the 'national' interest, although it is recognized that all this must be worked out in the context of multinational or supranational organizations.

FTAA must be understood as an opportunity for Québec to expand its cultural presence in the broadest sense of the word and to use an internationalized market structure such as FTAA to validate the polity's own cultural identity. Yet Québec is in a distinctly minority position within FTAA, and it will have to use other means to ensure that its voice is heard. This involves a necessary collaboration with the Canadian Government and the Federal negotiating team. Given Québec's demonstrated historical links with Europe, the Québec Government will surely take advantage of these links to promote economic development using the tools of cultural expansion while working in collaboration with other members of La Francophonie, some of which have a stake in FTAA. One specific means to achieve this end could be to establish a cultural development fund under FTAA in order to promote any number of unique regional cultural identities, including that of Québec.

The Commission des Institutions summed up the Québec position as follows:

> *Il est essentiel que le Québec s'assure que le processus d'intégration n'occulte pas les enjeux linguistiques et mette au point une stratégie qui privilégie la diversité linguistique et la promotion du multilinguisme. Cette stratégie doit viser à donner à la langue*

[10] See Alis Technologies inc. *Alis Technologies Inc. lance son projet de création d'un centre international des langues, Communiqué de presse*. ST-LAURENT (Québec) : Alis Technologies Inc., 11 November 1999.

française une place sur l'échiquier linguistique interaméricain.
(Commission *Rapport* 88)

Specifically this will involve a number of strategic steps.

The combined efforts of the Québec and Canadian Governments will have to be brought to bear in order to develop the multilingual character of interamerican organizations. More generalized support will have to be given to initiatives like *La décennie québécoise des Amériques* in order to promote the development of a multilingual capacity in Québec. This will require interministerial cooperation involving but not limited to a variety of ministries: Education, Immigration, Citizen Relations, International Relations, Intergovernmental Affairs etc.

Both Québec and Canada will have to cooperate in the promotion of a heightened awareness among exporters in all member countries including culturally dominant players such as the United States of the socio-economic value of linguistic diversity and the integration of such into labeling policies and e-commerce business policies and procedures.

An agreement to liberalize trade in the Americas will only come about as a form of cultural, linguistic, social and economic partnership. It will, therefore, be in Québec's long-term interest, notwithstanding questions of sovereignty, to establish through a broad interamerican partnership a network of interested stakeholders in order to *multilatéraliser* (88) the promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity in an integrated American trade zone.

To promote or to protect: an analytical dilemma

The literature is replete with lists of challenges that one must be able to analyze carefully in navigating the continuum between integrated sovereignty and subservience to international or supragovernmental authorities.

Specific issues will require attention and coordinated action. All parties will have to recognize the potential hegemony of e-commerce under the domination of international computer networks and globalized business operations supported by culturally-specific software. Negotiating environments will need to become more open to influences outside the closed business-government circle and encourage the participation of a broad range of members from civil society notwithstanding the well-established trend whereby the Québec Government has progressively taken on the responsibilities of community-based organizations. A conscious effort will have to be made to maintain linguistic and cultural identities within multilingual work teams. A number of authors have identified these issues as key to future development in multicultural and multilingual markets.[11]

As Habermas has pointed out on several occasions, polities do run the risk of having their national autonomy – or potential sovereignty in the Québec example – undermined by

[11] See, for example, the work done by González Manet, Ramonet, Habermas, Koenig and Chevrier.

supranational organizations to whom regulatory powers may have been delegated or assigned. This could have potentially dilatory effects on cultural and linguistic autonomy, particularly in smaller, more vulnerable states which want to preserve and protect their linguistic and cultural specificity. Québec's concerns are obvious. Yet, on the other hand, as Koenig has pointed out, a supranational authority may, in fact, provide comfort for smaller polities focused on nation-building and the reinforcement through outside forces of their own cultural and linguistic specificity. Hence, following the approach which has become the mark of political leaders in the sovereignty movement, Québec could use FTAA for this very purpose and seek out political, cultural and linguistic recognition by short-circuiting the domestic Canadian political process. International legitimation through supranational organizations may then serve the purpose of autonomists. Hence, domestic conflicts may, in fact, be better managed by channeling information flows and cultural/linguistic action through international fora in order to influence federal domestic policy in a more effective manner. This strategy may, in fact, be a precursor to actual formal negotiations. Following a long-standing tradition in the French-speaking world as described by Louis Dollot, culture and language may consequently be used as powerful instruments of national economic development fostering the emergence of an enhanced national identity through the process of globalization. Therefore, the promotion of Québec's official language and the majority culture may in the context of globalization constitute the most effect tool for their protection and preservation. The choice may not be between two opposing alternatives, but rather the adoption of complementary, parallel strategies. The question is not then: to protect or promote. It is more appropriately an issue of protecting through promotion.

An opportunity to be seized

In point of fact, the final report on FTAA produced by the National Assembly shows evidence of this strategic shift. Legislators seemed to indicate that, properly managed, globalization might serve the 'national' interest in the very broad sense of the word. It was recognized that cultural protectionism, despite its allure for small language minorities, presents dangers which far outweigh the benefits of cultural expansion.

Indeed, cultural expansion will reinforce both 'national' identity and pride in the majority culture. As Québec moves more assuredly toward the model of a postnational society, it sees itself developing culturally and economically under the aegis of a supranational authority. Clearly, it will - in collaboration with other partners including the Canadian Federal Government - develop new structures at the level of government, business and civil society to manage issues of cultural and linguistic identity in a globalized context of diversity.

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